(b) The present vacancy position is summarised below:

	Sanctioned	Posted	Vacant
Group A	92	77	15
Group B	398	331	67

Out of this 3 Group 'A' officers and 55 Group 'B' officers have recently been-posted.

(c) 11 posts of Group 'A' have been recently created. These are likely to be filled up shortly. Vacancies do arise on completion of two years tenure, and action is continuously taken to fill up the posts as and when they arise.

P.C.O. Connections in Bihar

544. CHAUDHARY HARMOHAN SINGH YADAV: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to the answers to Unstarred Questions 434, 627 and 1375 given in the Rajya Sabha on 26th February, 1997, 2nd June, 1998 and 9th June, 1998, respectively and state;

(a) whether all the rural women in Trimubani Ghat, Bahara, Darbhanga (Bihar) who have applied for the PCO/ ISD/STD connection during the year 1996-97 and 1997-98 have got the connection;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) to (c) Sir, only two applications in Trimubani Ghat and Bahara of Darbhanga District (Bihar) are pending for the year 1997-98. They will be provided STD PCOs after expansion of Benipur Exchange and approval by the PCO allotment committee.

Vacant Posts of Superintendent of Post Offices

545. SHRI JOYANTA ROY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of districts in West Bengal in which the posts of Superintendent of post offices are lying vacant during the last six months; and

(b) the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Only, One.

(b) Officers posted successively against the vacant post of Superintendent of Post Offices, Murshidabad have not joined. Presently, a case filed in the Central Administrative Tribunal against the order of posting is pending. Superintendent of Post Offices, Birbhum Division is holding the charge of Murshidabad Division as an additional charge.

डाक सेवाओं के प्रभारों में वृद्धि

546. **श्री रामजी लाल:** क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि सरकार ने 31 अगस्त, 1998 से डाक सेवाओं के प्रभारों में भारी वृद्धि की थी;

(ख) यदि हां, तो इसके क्या कारण थे और यह निर्णय कब लिया गया था; और

(ग) डाक सेवाओं के प्रभारों में वृद्धि से सरकार को कितनी आय होगी?

संचार मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री कबीन्द्र पुरकायस्थ): (क) और (ख) 31 अगस्त, 1998 से केवल आठ डाक सेवाओं के संबंध में शुल्क में संशोधन किया गया था ताकि उन विभिन्न डाक सेवाओं की बढ़ी हुई प्रचालन लागत को पूरा किया जा सके, जिनके लिए आम बजट से अत्यधिक आर्थिक सहायता लेनी पड़ती थी। यह अनुमान है कि शुल्क में संशोधन के बावजूद राजस्व अधिकांश डाक सेवाओं की प्रचालन लागत को पूरा करने के लिए पर्याप्त नहीं होगा।

(ग) ऐसा अनुमान है कि शुल्क में वृद्धि से प्रतिवर्ष 272 करोड़ रु० तथा चालू वित्तीय वर्ष में लगभग 159 करोड़ रु० अतिरिक्त राजस्व प्राप्त होगा।

Commemorative Stamps

547. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of commemorative

stamps issued since independence to honour distinguished Indians and foreigners;

(b) the criteria on the basis of which decisions to issue such stamps are made; and

(c) whether Government would consider the proposal to have a group of eminent elder citizens to advise it on these selections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) The number of commemorative stamps issued since independence to honour distinguished Indians and foreigners is 441 and 58 respectively.

(b) New proposals for issue of commemorative stamps are examined in the light of existing guidelines given in the Statment (*See* below).

(c) There is a Philatic Advisory Committee which has on its body, eminent citizens from the fields of philately, art and culture and which examines proposals received for issue of commemorative/special stamps on the basis of the guidelines' stipulations. This Committee has the Minister of Communications as its Chairman.

Statement

Guidelines

1. Proposals should be taken up well in advance say about two years before the proposed date of issue alongwith full details to enable proper examination and obtaining recommendations of the Philatelic Advisory Committee.

2. A stamp on a living personality may not be issued.

3. The personalities on whom commemorative stamps may be issued should be of national or international importance and the occasion may be the Birth Centenary/10th/25th/50th or 100th Death Anniversary.

4. Not more than one stamp may be issued on the same personality/Monument/Building/Institution or Organisation.

5. A stamp on an Institution, Building, Monument etc. may be issued on its centenary/125th Anniversary/150th Anniversary etc.

6. Events of very important national or international character only may be considered for issue of stamps.

7. Out of the commemorative/special stamps issued every year those on personalities should not normally exceed 25%. Atleast 25% stamps every year should be on popular themes like flora and fauna, arts and culture, etc.

Electronic network in Andhra Pradesh

548. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of proposal of Andhra Pradesh Government for taking up on a pilot basis an integrated application for providing services to citizens over electronic networks involving some departments of the Central Government also;

(b) whether Government propose to extend financial assistance for the project to Andhra Pradesh Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M. R. JANARTHANAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Government of India is supporting the following two pilot projects for:

(i) Development and deploment of multi-purpose, multimedia, scaleable information warehouse, being implemented by Centre for Development of Advance Computing (C-DAC), Pune.